

INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION,  
995 DREXEL BUILDING,  
PHILADELPHIA.

June 16, 1914.

TO OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

We ask your prompt consideration of the appeal which follows, prepared by Mr. S. M. Brosius, our Washington Agent, for aid in securing the passage of the bill now pending in the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives, which includes a provision for supplying water from the proposed San Carlos Reservoir for the irrigation of the lands of the Pima Indians, in Arizona.

For many years we have been interested in the effort to protect the rights of these Indians to the use of water for irrigation of their land. We believe the pending bill (H. R. 17016) now being considered by the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House is a practical way of securing a fair measure of justice for the Pimas, and we hope you will write to your Member of the House of Representatives asking his aid in securing the adoption of the legislation.

CARL E. GRAMMER,  
*President I. R. A.*

## Irrigation of Pima Lands

### An Appeal for Prompt Legislation

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The wrongs suffered by the Pima Indians of Arizona have often been told. A recapitulation seems desirable in order that their present need of a permanent water supply for irrigation, as embodied in pending legislation, may be more clearly presented and understood.

The Pimas were prehistoric settlers on lands in southwest Arizona within the reservation they now occupy. They

are an industrious people and supported themselves by agriculture many generations prior to the advent of the white man. Their lands were rendered fertile through irrigation by the coursing waters of the Gila River.

By the law of prior appropriation the Pimas are entitled to sufficient water of the river for their continued needs in tilling the soil. Alike with other Indians the United States assumed guardianship over them. As wards the Pimas had no right of appeal to the courts. *The guardian Government failed to protect them in their prior right to the use of water for irrigation.*

The waters of the Gila have been for several years appropriated by settlers on the River above the reservation, depriving the Pimas of sufficient water for farming purposes, thus reducing them to extreme poverty, until the Government was induced to succor them temporarily by appropriation.

On appeal to the Government for redress, a system of wells was constructed, without consulting the Indians, and water for irrigation raised by use of electric power.

The continued use of well water has been found to be unsatisfactory by reason of its impregnation with alkali which is deleterious to vegetable growth and not feasible for continued cropping, unless diluted with the purer water of the river. Furthermore, the cost of electric power for elevating the water is believed to be prohibitive for general farming purposes.

The Pimas are entitled to the free use of the running river water.

Since settlers have been permitted to appropriate the water belonging to the Pimas it is proposed to construct a reservoir to furnish water for irrigation of their lands. The friends of the Pimas secured legislation in 1912 authorizing the appointment of a Board of Engineers of the Army to investigate and report upon the feasibility and advisability of constructing what is known as the San Carlos Reservoir on the San Carlos Indian Reservation, Arizona. This Board states in its Report, dated February 14, 1914 (H. R. Doc. 790, 63d Congress, 2d Session), that the construction of the proposed reservoir is "entirely feasible from physical



considerations," and in referring to the rights and needs of the Pimas the Board adds:

"\* \* \* in dealing with this question it is not more important to right the wrong of the past than to provide for the future advancement of the tribe. There is no other way to effect a satisfactory and permanent solution of the long-standing Pima question."

The Board of Engineers recommends that the San Carlos project be constructed, and that suit for an adjudication of the claims along the Gila River be immediately brought in the United States Court to determine Pima and other water rights.

To provide a proper supply of water for irrigation of Pima Lands we urge the support of friends of the Indian for the bill H. R. 17016, introduced by Hon. Carl Hayden, now pending before the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House, which is intended to carry out the recommendation of the Board of Engineers. That portion of the bill referring to the Pimas in brief authorizes suits to be instituted to determine the amount of land cultivated by the Pimas which has been deprived of an adequate supply of water for irrigation from the natural flow of the Gila River by reason of the failure of the United States, as guardian of the Indians, to protect their rights, and provides that water for such lands shall be furnished free of all charges for the construction of the reservoir. It is provided that water for irrigation of any additional lands of the Pimas shall be furnished at rates similar to those charged other water users, but on more liberal terms of payment.

By the terms of the pending bill the Pimas will be obliged to meet the annual maintenance charge of the project, but it is believed that an assured water supply at a time when most needed will fully compensate them for the upkeep of the project.

The construction of the proposed San Carlos project will incur an estimated outlay of over \$6,000,000, for the irrigation of 40,000 acres of Pima and 55,000 acres of public and private lands. The people interested should urge

upon Congress the need for such legislation as may be necessary.

We urgently request that all friends of the Indians will write to their Congressmen and the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives and solicit their interest in the passage of the pending bill (H. R. 17016) and urge that necessary provision be made for the rights of the Indians.

Very respectfully,

S. M. BROSIUS,  
*Agent Indian Rights Association.*

MCGILL BLDG., WASHINGTON, D. C.,

*June 13, 1914.*